

## Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – April 14, 2014

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, S. Lennon and M. Case.
2. After leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes from April 7, 2014, after amending a typographical error in the date. M. Case seconded and the vote to accept was unanimous.
3. R. Borgnis was videoing the meeting.
4. J. Huebner mentioned that he and M. Case had attended the Berkshire Selectmen's Association annual dinner on Thursday last week. He ended up seated next to Frank DePaola of DOT. He pushed Mr. DePaola for information about DOT's dropping the reconstruction of Washington Mountain Road (WMR) from the transportation bill, without much success. J. Huebner said that he did hear from Representative Pignatelli today in response to his letter. He has not had a response from Sen. Downing. Representative Pignatelli was surprised to learn that WMR had been dropped. He has been speaking with Peter Niles at DOT District 1 in Lenox about this and has been told that it is not a done deal yet.
5. Mr. Roos and his son Cory, a senior at Wahconnah, asked the Board about applying for an Emma Bailey scholarship. Cory has been accepted at Berkshire Community College. The Board directed them to J. Hostetter's office.
6. J. Huebner read a notice of an Emergency Management meeting on the subject of responding to accidents involving the hazardous materials which pass through our towns by rail and truck. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 16 at Town Hall in Hinsdale.

7. Responding to the Board's request for an update on the business census mailing, J. Hostetter told them that we have received about 99 responses to date. She will enter the information in her spread sheet and create a database for further analysis. She added that she is currently working on the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) warrant and will try to finish a draft tonight with the latest information from the Finance Committee. She told the Board that M. Wiley had sent her the Large Scale Wind Turbine ban language from the Planning Board for inclusion in our existing small scale wind energy by-law. J. Hostetter will make this change to the existing by-law and email it to M. Wiley for proofing and approval.
8. J. Hostetter asked the Board about renewing the Town's practice of awarding Certificates of Appreciation at the ATM to recognize the outstanding service of individual residents. J. Hostetter had suggested that now- retired Frank Kennedy deserved recognition for his years of service as ballot box constable, creator of the Town web site and active COA membership. She also suggested, as another candidate for the Certificate, recently deceased Peter Borgnis who served the Town for many years on the Finance Committee. Rose Borgnis told the Board that her brother had received a Certificate of Appreciation a number of years ago. The Board reviewed the sample Certificate of Appreciation form J. Hostetter showed them and asked for some changes in the wording. They approved J. Hostetter's suggestion regarding the Certificate of Appreciation awards for this year.
9. J. Huebner reported receiving a letter from DOT informing the Town that we will be getting \$25,451 in addition to our regular Chapter 90 funding to use for road repairs necessitated by the rough winter. This money must be spent by June 30<sup>th</sup>. He will sign in acceptance and send the form back to DOT. Regular Ch. 90 funds are provisionally \$169,175 this year.
10. J. Huebner opened discussion of issues raised in an email he had received from J. Hostetter about R. Borgnis posting her videos of Select Board meetings on YouTube. J. Hostetter objected strongly to

this practice as a violation of her privacy. J. Huebner consulted Town Counsel about her concerns. He was told that the Town has no control over what R. Borgnis does with her video recordings. Privacy objections such as those raised by J. Hostetter have reached the courts, but there are no guiding decisions yet. J. Huebner said that there is only one official record of Select Board meetings and that is the written record.

T. Drugmand said that she was aware that the minutes were sometimes in error or incomplete. She cited her experience registering a complaint about how the minutes described her recent insurance settlement. J. Huebner said that the Board had agreed with her and in response amended the minutes accordingly and to her satisfaction. J. Hostetter added that the minutes are not verbatim, but are a summary of the proceedings. J. Huebner urged all residents to come out to the Selectmen's meetings, to read the minutes online on our web-site and to raise any objections to the Board promptly.

11. J. Huebner briefly reviewed/mentioned the following:

- a. J. Huebner reported receiving bills from Becket for \$1000 for use of Center Pond Beach and \$10,000 for fire protection.
- b. He asked J. Hostetter to tell Veterans' Agent Peter Blake that Town burial records are in the file cabinets outside her office.
- c. The Board signed a permit application to use the auditorium for a children's party on Monday, April 21.
- d. Minutes of a Westfield Wild & Scenic meeting held March 27 containing news about pipelines proposed for western mass. To be posted.
- e. MMA requests help from us for our community listing. To be given to Allison.
- f. Letter from DEP regarding grant applications. Meetings to be held in several locations across the state next month.
- g. Notices of several public hearings in Lee this month. To be posted.
- h. Permit payment from Mark Levernoch for plumbing and gas fitting @ \$55.00. Permit payment from Zieder Plumbing for gas fitting @ \$55.00.

- i. Public health nurses to visit the Select Board meeting May 5.
- j. Chief Breen has found a defibrillator instructor. Cost is \$25 per student. Date of May 1 suggested.

12. Jeff Sawtelle told the Board that he has 38 residents signed up for the COA spring dinner party at Ozzie's tomorrow night. The regular COA dinner scheduled for this month falls on April 18 which is Good Friday. He was unaware of that until recently, but will go ahead with the dinner and the musical entertainment as it was advertised in the Tracks and a number of people have told him they are planning to attend. He has had no contact with the health inspector yet.

13. The Board acknowledged receipt of a \$50.00 donation from Scott Lively. The accompanying note did not indicate how the money should be spent. M. Case suggested that, as Mr. Lively was a religious man, it be given to the Chapel fund. The Board agreed and J. Huebner will send a thank you note. He made a motion to accept the money on behalf of the Town for use in the Chapel fund. M. Case seconded and the vote was unanimous. He also acknowledged receipt of a \$175.00 check from Susan Fitzpatrick which she requested go to the Chapel.

14. J. Huebner asked J. Nelson if she had further information on the availability of credit counseling for town employees. She responded that she had identified an excellent non-profit resource in Pittsfield called Money Management. The service is free and provides help with budgeting, spending wisely and managing debt. M. Case added that he too had looked into this and had received recommendations for the same company. J. Huebner asked J. Nelson to pass the information along to the interested parties.

15. J. Huebner asked J. Nelson to email the minutes from 4/7/14, just approved by the Board, to Jennifer Kimball at Berkshire Public Health Alliance (BRHA). They document the Board's unanimous vote to adopt the BRHA's recommended fees on 4/7.

16. Assistant Sexton Shaun Lennon told the Board that, as requested, he has arranged to view all Town cemeteries with Sexton Richard Grillon.
  
17. Treasurer Glenn Grogan told the Board that he has received from D. Parnell the forms he needed to respond to the USDA loan inquiry. J. Huebner asked him to speak to Dick Spencer about paying the loan off in FY15. G. Grogan mentioned that the Town's health insurance cost has gone up by over 90%. This coverage is for Highway Department employees. He knows that he still has to get Adam Southard's hydraulic license date to arrange the adjusted payments due him. Adam gets paid his \$1.00 raise backdated to the day he got the hydraulic license. S. Lennon told him that he needs to have a copy of all highway department employees' licenses and certificates for insurance records. G. Grogan told the Board that he believes he has informed all Town employees about the changeover to bi-weekly paychecks starting in July. J. Huebner asked that he direct Universal Payroll to put a slip in the check mailing repeating the news about the switch to bi-weekly checks. G. Grogan told the board that Donna Stimpson of Lover's Lane has been hired to work alternate Saturdays for M. Lampro at the Transfer Station. J. Huebner asked him to contact MIIA and inquire about the Town's reimbursement for some of the bills submitted for the Drugmand's remediation.
  
18. The Assessors and Tax Collector Belinda Phillips joined the meeting to discuss a possible change in the timing of our property tax bills. D. Parnell and G. Grogan had suggested collecting taxes four times a year instead of two. They believed this would ease the Town's continuing cash flow problems. Other solutions mentioned were: getting a line of credit, or setting up a process to draw on free cash when needed. G. Grogan said that he had talked to the state about the line of credit approach. He learned that short-term borrowing had become very difficult to arrange. Our bank, TD Bank, refused to do it and is also changing the terms of our money market account so that it no longer makes sense for us to use it.

After several residents said that having to pay the property taxes quarterly would be a greater hardship for people, D. Parnell suggested that the best solution would probably be to set up our own working capital fund. He recommended holding \$100,000 in stabilization and building that up. He knows several towns which operate in this way. The biggest cause of this cash flow problem for all towns is the school bill. J. Huebner said that we may need to do a Special Town Meeting on these questions later in the year. D. Spencer added that we need a broader financial plan for the future. The Finance Committee will look into creating a financial plan for the Town.

19. P. Clark reported to the Board on his activities. He is pursuing FEMA for Eden Glen mitigation funding. He believes this project is more likely to get funded in the near term than Cross Place Bridge. D. Spencer asked him the estimated cost of replacing the temporary Cross Place Bridge. He responded that is about \$200,000. He said that there are no inexpensive ways to do culvert replacements. They are very tightly regulated by the state with little regard to the burden this places on the towns which have to fund and carry out the work. The Transfer Station culvert replacement alone will involve permitting from multiple government agencies, all with their own requirements. J. Huebner said that he will raise this issue with the county Selectmen's Association. P. Clark is working with D. Fish about prioritizing our list of 70 projects. He will try to meet with him this week. He does not expect any further help from Westfield Wild & Scenic. J. Huebner asked him to prepare an engineering proposal for replacing the Cross Place Road bridge.
20. Town Clerk Allison Mikaniewicz told the Board that the state does not require towns to charge a fee for business registration, nor does there have to be an expiration date. The Board will meet with her further when the business census is completed.
21. D. Spencer reported that the Finance Committee had voted tonight on the Highway Department budget. The vote was in favor as it stands. They were undecided on the Community Preservation Act

and felt they needed more information on how it would be administered, prospective plans for projects etc. The consensus of the Select Board was that they also had too many questions about the CPA to go forward with it at this time. The decision was not to present it at the upcoming ATM. After discussion of how best to finance the new plow truck, J. Huebner made a motion to finance \$100,000 of the purchase, using Chapter 90 funds for the balance. M. Case seconded and the vote of the Board was unanimous. After further discussion of the budget, the Board asked J. Hostetter to write up the warrant based on the information we have developed to date and to email copies to the Finance Committee and the Board for proofing and corrections. We will finalize the warrant on Monday, 4/28. The warrant summary has to get into Tracks for the May issue and will also be posted on the web site. J. Huebner will warn L. Guthrie that the warrant summary will reach her after the 28<sup>th</sup> and to “hold the presses”.

22. At 9:12 J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. S. Lennon seconded and the motion to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes written by J. Nelson